(c) whether Karnataka Government has prepared any plan to double the number of foreign tourists visiting Karnataka by the end of this year;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the amount sought by the Karnataka Government to develop tourist places in Karnataka during 2002-2003; and

(f) the amount if any, released to Karnataka during 2002-2003 under various tourism promotion projects?

THE MINISTER OFTOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Foreign tourist arrivals to India during the years 2001,2002 and 2003 (Jan.-Feb.) are around 2.54 million, 2.36 million and 0.55 million respectively.

(b) Foreign tourist visits in the State of Karnataka during the years 2001,2002 and 2003 (Jan.-Feb.) are 144402,117621 and 13329 respectively.

(c) and (d) The steps taken by the State Government to increase the flow of tourists to the State include action to provide infrastructure facilities at all important tourists destinations, participation in all the important international tourism Marts to sell the tourism products of the State and distribution of publicity materials in the international market.

(e) and (f) During the year 2002-03, the Department of Tourism, Govt, of India, has sanctioned an amount of Rs. 782.49 lakhs and released Rs. 324.49 lakhs for development of Hampi, Kokkare Bellur, Konkan Riviera circuit and Beugle Rock Garden at Basavanagudi.

World heritage status to Hyderabad City

2142. SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMACHANDRAYYA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether out of the 730 sites under the World Heritage Committee 23 are in Inida;

(b) whether world heritage status is likely to be provided to Hyderabad City; and

(c) if not, whether Hyderabad would seek UNESCO nomination for this year as one city from India could be given the status through the good offices of Government?

THE MINISTER OFTOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) As per the decision taken by the World Heritage Committee in 2000, one site per country is allowed for nomination every year. The Pre-historic site at Bhimbetka has been approved for nomination in 2002.

A proposal has been formulated to include more sites from India, including Hyderabad City in the revised tentative list for World Heritage Status. However, Golconda Fort already figures in the existing tentative list of UNESCO.

MoU with China to boost tourism industry

2143. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has signed an MoU with China to give boost to tourism industry, as reported in the Indian Express of 10th December, 2002;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether India has been accorded special status by China for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OFTOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Department of Tourism of the Government of the Republic of India and the National Tourism Administration of the People's Republic of China on the Implementation Plan for organised group travel by Chinese citizens to India was signed in New Delhi on 8th December, 2002 in pursuance of the bilateral tourism cooperation agreement signed on 14th January, 2002 between the two countries. With the signing of this Memorandum of Understanding China has accorded 'Approved Destination Status' to India since China operates its outbound tourism through such a system only. This MoU will enable Chinese travel agencies to organise the outbound travel of groups of Chinese citizens to India and publicise such tour packages.